after his accession. His descendants held the throne for approximately thirty years. Their rule was terminated by Yang Chien—of whom more below—who once more united all China and founded the Sui.

These, then, were the dynasties which reigned in the South. Probably because they were predominantly Chinese in blood, orthodox Chinese historians regard them as in the legitimate line of succession as contrasted with the kingdoms of the North, which usually had at their head princes of partially or entirely non-Chinese stock. Some of the northern states were, however, fully as powerful and civilized as were their southern neighbors and also laid claim to imperial prerogatives.

With all the division, it is significant that the title of Emperor and with it the idea of unity were not allowed to lapse. Thanks to the work of the Ch'in and the Han—and, probably, to the traditions of pre-Ch'in times—the Chinese still thought of themselves as part of a cultural whole over which there could be only a single fully legitimate supreme ruler. Civilized human society, even though at times divided, must, they thought, ultimately be politically one.

AN ERA OP DIVISION: THE NON-CHINESE STATES OF THE NORTH

During these centuries of division, events in the North were even more confused and kaleidoscopic than in the South. The many states, most of them established by invaders, usually had rapidly shifting boundaries and as a rule several were in existence at one time. Wars among them and with the dynasties of the South were frequent. Only the chief of the states and a few of the more prominent events need here be mentioned.

We have seen that the Western Chin came to its

end largely through the attacks of non-Chinese peoples. These were the Hsiung Nu, so frequently mentioned in the preceding pages. Their power had been broken by the Han, but they had maintained their separate existence under their own chiefs and were numerous in the northern marches. Many of them were in the service of the Emperors. When the Chin began to show weakness they threw off its yoke. Their ruling family claimed descent from the Han through a princess of that house who had been given to one of its ancestors in marriage. Accordingly it assumed